**Living with Paradox**

**It’s an age of paradox when we have mobile homes that don’t move, sports clothes for work, junk food that costs more than the real food, and sweat shirts to loaf in. *(Arch Napier, in The Wall Street Journal)***

**Dry air is heavier than humid air. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 14)***

**It’s one thing for a Kansas doctor to prescribe beer for a patient’s health – that’s legal – and quite another for said doctor to drink it with said patient – that’s illegal. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The pioneer in blood plasma research died a death of cruel irony. Dr. Charles Drew of Washington bled to death in 1950 of injuries received in an automobile accident. He saved thousands of lives during the war because he developed ways of preserving plasma and storing large quantities of blood. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 124)***

**The first bourbon whiskey reportedly was made by a Baptist minister in 1789. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Mel Blanc, the voice of Bugs Bunny, was allergic to carrots. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 11)***

**Four business ironies: Welchs autobiography – never mentions grape juice; Arthur Davidson (Harley-Davidson) – died in a car crash; G. Parker (Parker Bros.) – thought Monopoly “a fad”; Daimler and Benz – lived 60 miles apart, never met. *(Doug Gelbert, in So Who the Heck was Oscar Mayer?)***

**A chicken roasted under five pounds of salt in an iron pot won’t come out tasting salty, I’m told. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Wasn’t cold winters, but cold summers, that started the last Ice Age, I’m told. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**I pledge allegiance to the Constitution, which also makes it unconstitutional. *(Bill Flick)***

**When you go into court you are putting your fate into the hands of 12 people who weren’t smart enough to get out of jury duty. *(Norm Crosby, comedian)***

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**Marie Curie, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist who discovered radium, died on July 4, 1934, of radiation poisoning. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 201)***

**Marie Curie, the chemist who discovered radium, died of leukemia, caused by exposure to radiation. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 206)***

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**In which month are the fewest number of divorces granted? Same month the fewest number of couples are married – January. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Now that we know for certain that earth isn’t flat, we have a whole new problem. Some scientists think the universe could be pretty near flat. *(L. M. Boyd***

**P. J. Tierney, father of the modern diner, died of indigestion in 1917 after eating in a diner. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 1)***

**Nature’s most pervasive force – gravity – is also, paradoxically, its weakest. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts)***

In 1596, Guido Fawkes (1570-1606), an expert with gunpowder, was persuaded by Robert Catesby, leader of the Catholic team plotting to blow up British parliament and King James I of England in London, to help with the scheme. This became known as the Gunpowder Plot and the English celebrate the anniversary of the day the plotters were caught by, among other things, setting off fireworks. *Charlotte Lowe, in Useless History Fact-O-Pedia, p. 130)*

**Straight human hair is circular; curly hair is flat. *(E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts, p. 1)***

**The state in the United States that has the least lake water is Hawaii. It has only 25 square miles of inland bodies of water. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A visitor returning from Florida reports that there are a lot of people down there who are homesick for winter. He reasons: “Why else would they be sitting around staring at ice cubes in their glasses.” *(Clyde Moore, in Columbus Dispatch)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Ninety percent of the world’s ice is in Antarctica, though precipitation there averages only two inches per year. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 13)***

**Working at a Cape Cod marina, I dropped a 40-pound bag of ice on my foot. In pain, I removed my shoe to assess the damage. A passing coworker glanced at my foot. “Hey, that’s pretty swollen,” he said.  “Maybe you should put some ice on it.” *(James Russo, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**Sorry, our language Man cannot explain how it came to be that the idiom has us park in the driveway and drive in the parkway. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 28)***

**“Birdbrain” isn’t much of an insult, says an insulter with scientific savvy. A bird’s brain is fairly sizable compared to that of other animals. But not the brain of a fish. For accuracy of insult, advises this expert, say “Fishbrain.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Ironic, isn’t it? Crayola’s most senior crayon maker – was colorblind; Deep-sea diving vehicle inventor – couldn’t drive car; Pope Nicholas V – endorsed slavery (1450); Lincoln – OK’d idea of Secret Service on day of his assassination; Augustus Juilliard – not a musician (He just enjoyed music and founded Julliard School of Music). *(World Features Syndicate)***

**It’s a strange thing how unimportant your job is when you’re asking for a raise, but how important it can be when you want to take the day off.  
*(Bits & Pieces)***

**Boris Karloff, the world’s most famous Frankenstein, started in the business telling children’s stories on BBC radio. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 18)***

**The famous gambling center, Las Vegas, claims to have the highest number of churches per capita in the entire world. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 18)***

**Life is unfair. I lost my car keys at a ball game and never found them. I lost my sunglasses at the beach and never found them. I lost my socks in the washing machine and never found them. I lost three pounds on a diet – I found them and five more. *(Robert Orben, humorist)***

**Sophia Loren made both the Best-Dressed and Worst-Dressed Women lists in 1972. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 18)***

**What made the first people in Los Angeles settle there? Freshwater springs. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**“Mafia” comes from a 10th century Arabic word meaning “sanctuary.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Curious, is it not, that our word “matinee” – a show we see in the afternoon – comes from the French word for “morning”? *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 123)***

**Uninsured Americans spend an annual average of $934 on medical expenses. Insured Americans shell out an average of $2,347 a year on health care. *(The New Yorker, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 9, 2005)***

**Pierre Michelin, inventor of super-safe Michelin tires, died in a car accident. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Extraordinary Book of Facts, p. 1)***

**A male mouse, immediately after mating, kills every baby mouse he can catch. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Stop lights should be called go lights. Football’s sudden death should be called sudden life. Retirement should be called recommencement. So suggests a positive thinker. What other negative nomenclature merits revision? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Robert Moses, the planner largely responsible for many of New York’s bridges, tunnels, and parkways, never learned to drive an automobile. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 105)***

**Swedish chemist and inventor Alfred Nobel left his estate to endow annual prizes for those who have conferred the greatest benefit to humanity, now known as Nobel Prizes; Nobel made his fortune by inventing the highly destructive explosive dynamite. *(Harry Bright & Harlan Briscoe, in So, Now You Know, p. 146)***

**An oxymoron is defined as “a common phrase made up of two words that appear to be contradictory.” Examples include pretty ugly, friendly takeover, jumbo shrimp, tax return, working vacation, sweet sorrow, somewhat addictive, student teacher, and random order. *(Kathy Wolfe, in Tidbits)***

**When you sail from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Panama Canal, you are traveling in an easterly direction. The canal is located at a curve in the isthmus of Panama and the Atlantic entrance is farther west than the Pacific entrance. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 67)***

**It reeks of paradox. The only way you can do anything of value is to have the effort come out of non-doing and to let go of caring whether it will be of use or not. *(Jon Kabat Zinn, in The Practice of Kindness)***

**What’s the closest relative in the animal world to the elephant? A furry little critter about the size of a rabbit – the hyrax. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Winter is the season in which people try to keep the house as warm as it was in the summer, when they complained about the heat. *(Young Miss)***

**In German, “shhhh” doesn’t mean “quiet.” It means “hurry up.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**The milk snake, in truth, absolutely won’t drink milk. (*L. M. Boyd)***

**Of the world’s 10 deadliest snakes, seven live in Australia. But only about four people die of snakebites there each year. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 251)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Josef V. D. Stalin, during whose reign an estimated 30,000,000 people were murdered or starved to death, was a theology student in his youth. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s a Weird World, p. 116)***

**Lou Chaney, the original Phantom of the Opera and one of Hollywood’s great horror stars, started in local theater playing clowns. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 18)***

**Only a stupid person commits traceable crimes. Only an intelligent person becomes expert on computers. Both statements can’t be right. Yet numerous hackers nationwide are charged with credit card thefts. How can they simultaneously be so smart and so stupid? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The claim is that the cost of the Stealth Bomber is greater than the cost of anything else any government ever bought. So, where will the contractors put this incredibly expensive hardware? Over the San Andreas Fault. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Suicide rate among psychologists nationwide is six times that of the general population. (*Boyd’\s Curiosity Shop, p. 184)***

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**People used to think that the closer you went to the Sun, the hotter it   
would be. But as hot air rises it expands and cools, so the higher you go the colder it is. *(The Usborne Book of Facts & Lists, p. 100)***

**The sun is about three million miles closer to the earth on January 1 than it is on June 1. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 169)***

**The distance of the sun from the earth has no bearing upon winter and summer. The sun is farthest from the earth in summer and closest in winter. *(E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts, p. 115)***

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**If swimming is so good for your figure, how do you explain whales? *(Tidbits)***

**In 1976 the swine flu vaccine caused more deaths than the illness it was intended to prevent. *(Noel Botham, in The Ultimate Book of Useless Information, p. 75)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*The Swiss eat more animal fat than any other nationals except the Australians. Also, the Swiss live longer than any other nationals except the Japanese. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Nation with the most automatic guns per capita – Switzerland – has the lowest fire-arms-related crime rate, according to reports. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Jack Norworth, who wrote the popular baseball song, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game,” had never seen a baseball game when he wrote that song in 1908. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 85)***

**Teenagers are people who express a burning desire to be different by dressing exactly alike. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Most of the people who suffer from that ailment known as “tennis elbow” don’t play tennis. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**John Howard Payne, who wrote the song “There’s No Place Like Home” spent most of his life traveling – and rarely had a home of his own. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 85)***

**Softwood trees can be harder than hardwood trees. *(Don Voorhees, in The Perfectly Useless Book of Useless Information, p. 173)***

**A Catholic in good conscience cannot support a politician who supports the right to an abortion. Apparently, a vote for John Kerry might mean a trip to the confessional. Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. Instead of voting for a president who launched a pre-emptive war against a nation that posed no immediate threat, killing thousands of people, a president who has shown little regard for the poor or elderly and whose version of faith holds no room for humility, I voted for a man who is personally opposed to abortion but who supports the Constitution of our land. *(Tina Griego, in the Rocky Mountain News, October 14, 2004)***

**The amazing waterfall of Kapilatirtham, India – its flow always increases during periods of drought! *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Odd Places, p. 25)***

**Not every fan of the late John Wayne knew he hated horses. At least, he said he did. *(L. M. Boyd)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**We can’t understand why goods sent by ship is called a cargo, while goods sent in a freight car is a shipment! *(Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living magazine)***

**There is no egg in eggplant or ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins were not invented in England nor French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies, while sweetbreads, which aren’t sweet, are meat. We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig. And why is it that writers write, but fingers don’t fing, grocers don’t groce, and hammers don’t ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn’t the plural of booth beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So, one moose, 2 meese? One index, two indices? Is cheese the plural of choose? If teachers taught, why didn’t preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? In what language do people recite at a play, and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? Park on driveways and drive on parkways? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites? How can the weather be hot as hell one day and cold as hell another? When a house burns up, it burns down. You fill in a form by filling it out and an alarm clock goes off by going on. When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it? Now I know why I flunked English. It’s not my fault -- the silly language doesn’t quite know whether it’s coming or going. *(Tidbits)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**How come a quart of wet wheat weighs less than a quart of dry wheat? Wheat swells the grains and it takes fewer to fill the quart. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The Wizard of Oz: Margaret Hamilton, who played the Wicked Witch of the West, was a kindergarten teacher who adored children. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 26)**

**In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 100 workers were laid off at the state’s unemployment agency. *(Bill Flick)***

**The world’s surface is only 28 percent land and 72 percent water, but we call this planet “earth” and not “ocean.” It is not right. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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